
**HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD
STAFF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION**

Property Address:	939 T Street, NW	Agenda
Landmark/District:	U Street Historic District	X Consent Calendar
		X Concept Review
Meeting Date:	February 28, 2013	X Alteration
H.P.A. Number:	13-150	New Construction
Staff Reviewer:	Steve Callcott	Demolition
		Subdivision

Architect Bill Smith, representing owners Scott Fay and Brett DeWitt, seeks conceptual design review for a three-story addition on the rear of a two-story contributing row house in the U Street Historic District. The addition would have limited visibility through a mid-block alley.

Property Description

939 T Street was constructed by builder John Sweeney for developer John Sherman in 1880. Sherman is recorded as having undertaken speculative rowhouse development in the 1880s and 1890s, but is best known today as the founder of the Cleveland Park Company where, together with his wife Ella Bennett Sherman, they platted the subdivision and designed the first houses in that neighborhood in the 1890s.

Located adjacent to a narrow 10' alley that runs parallel to Vermont Avenue, 939 T Street occupies an unusually small wedge-shaped lot. While the architectural character of the façade is typical of speculative rowhouses of the period -- with corbelled brick work, a raised English basement and full height projecting bays -- the unusual lot results in the house having a wide front façade (with two projecting bays) and a shallow one-room-deep footprint.

Proposal

The proposal calls for removing portions of the rear wall and extending the footprint by approximately 12 feet. The addition would extend above the rear of the existing roof to provide a small roof top room and access to a roof deck. The addition would be clad in brick on the side and hardi-plank siding on the rear.

The one-over-one windows and non-original front door would be replaced with wood units. One additional window opening is proposed for the side (alley) elevation.

Evaluation and Recommendation

The addition is subordinate to the house, and is compatible in size, footprint, materials and fenestration. While extending one floor taller than the main block of the house, this additional floor would not extend over the original portion of the house and, based on a field test mock up with the architect, would not be visible from any perspective views

within the street or from the entrance to the alley. By setting the roof deck down within the roof framing, the front parapet wall will effectively screen it from public view and obviate the need for a handrail.

While precise specifications will be needed, the proposed window and door replacements with new wood units to replicate the original condition, and the addition of a new window on the side elevation are compatible alterations.

The HPO recommends that the Review Board find the proposal compatible with the character of the house and historic district, and delegate final approval to staff.